THE APOLOGY.

ADDRESSED TO THE

CRITICAL REVIEWERS.

BY

C. CHURCHILL.

Trilliiam et metus
Tradam protervis in mare CRITICUM
Portare ventis

THE SECOND EDITION,

REVISED AND CORRECTED.

LONDON:

Printed for the AUTHOR, and sold by W. FLEXNEY, [illegible]

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APOLOGY.

OF THE

CRITICAL REVIEWERS.

AND

CHURCHILL.

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CRITICAL REVIEWERS.

LAUGHS not the heart when Giants; [illegible]
with pride,
Assume the pompous port, the mas[illegible]
stride;
O'er arm Herculean heave th'enormous shield,
Vast as a weaver's beam the javelin wield;
With the loud voice of thund'ring Jove defy,

ough we less, when Giant names, which shine
rd as it were by right divine;
ics whom ev'ry captive art adores,
whom glad Science pours forth all her stores;
high in letter'd reputation sit,
hold, ASTRÆA like, the scales of Wit;
partial rage rush forth,---Oh! shame to tell!---
rush a bard just bursting from the shell?

HAT are his perils in this stormy time
o rashly ventures on a sea of Rhime.
vast surges roll, winds envious blow,
jealous rocks and quicksands lurk below,
his foes he dreads, but more his friends;
hurts me most who lavishly commends.

thro' the world---in ev'ry other trade
same employment's cause of kindness made;
appearance of good will creates;
ev'ry fool puffs off the fool he hates:
lers with cobblers smoak away the night,
in the common cause e'en play'rs unite.
with more than savage rage,

† Almanack war with Gothon another way.

The pride of Nature would as soon admit
Competitors in empire as in wit.
Onward they rush at Fame's imperious call,
And, less than greatest, would not be at all.

Smit with the love of Honour,—or the Pence,
O'er-run with wit, and destitute of sense,
If any novice in the rhiming trade,
With lawless pen the realms of verse invade;
Forth from the court where sceptered sages sit,
Abus'd with praise and flatter'd into wit;
Where in lethargic majesty they reign,
And what they won by dullness still maintain;
Legions of factious authors throng at once;
Fool beckons fool, and dunce awakens dunce.
To H-M-LT-N's the Ready Lies repair;—
Ne'er was Lie made which was not welcome there.—
Thence on maturer judgment's anvil wrought,
The polish'd falsehood's into public brought.
Quick circulating slanders mirth afford,
And reputation bleeds in ev'ry word.

A Critic was of old a glorious name,

Beauties as well as faults he brought to view;
His Judgment great, and great his Candour too.
No servile rules drew sickly taste aside;
Secure he walk'd, for Nature was his guide.
But now, Oh strange reverse! our Critics bawl
In praise of Candour with a Heart of Gall.
Conscious of guilt, and fearful of the light,
They lurk enshrouded in the veil of night:
Safe from detection, seize the unwary prey,
And stab, like bravoes, all who come that way.

When first my Muse, perhaps more bold then wise,
Bad the rude trifle into light arise,
Little she thought such tempests would ensue,
Less, that those tempests would be rais'd by you.
The thunder's fury rends the tow'ring oak,
Roscians, like shrubs, might 'scape the fatal stroke.
Vain thought! A Critic's fury knows no bound;
Drawcansir like, he deals destruction round;
Nor can we hope he will a stranger spare
Who gives no quarter to his friend Voltaire.

Unhappy Genius! plac'd, by partial fate;

Where the reluctant Muſe, oppreſs'd by kings,
Or droops in ſilence, or in fetters ſings.
In vain thy dauntleſs fortitude hath borne
The bigot's furious zeal, and tyrant's ſcorn.
Why did'ſt thou ſafe from home-bred dangers ſteer?
Reſerv'd to periſh more ignobly here.
Thus, when the Julian tyrant's pride to ſwell
Rome with her POMPEY at Pharſalia fell,
The vanquiſh'd chief eſcap'd from CÆSAR's hand
To die by ruffians in a foreign land.

How could theſe ſelf-elected monarchs raiſe
So large an empire on ſo ſmall a baſe?
In what retreat, inglorious and unknown,
Did Genius ſleep when Dullneſs ſeiz'd the throne?
Whence, abſolute now grown, and free from awe,
She to the ſubject world diſpenſes law.
Without her licence, not a letter ſtirs;
And all the captive criſs croſs row is her's.
The ſtagyrite, who rules from Nature drew,
Opinions gave, but gave his reaſons too.
Our great Dictators take a ſhorter way----
Who ſhall diſpute what the Reviewers ſay?

Their word's ſufficient; and to aſk a reaſon,
In ſuch a ſtate as their's, is downright treaſon.
True judgment, now, with them alone can dwell;
Like church of Rome they're grown infallible.
Poor ſuperſtitious readers they deceive,
Who pin their eaſy faith on critic's ſleeve,
And, knowing nothing, ev'ry thing believe!
But why repine we, that theſe Puny Elves
Shoot into Giants?---We may thank ourſelves;
Fools that we are, like Iſrael's fools of yore,
The Calf ourſelves have faſhion'd we adore.
But let true Reaſon once reſume her reign,
This God ſhall dwindle to a Calf again.

Founded on arts which ſhun the face of day,
By the ſame arts they ſtill maintain their ſway.
Wrapp'd in myſterious ſecrecy they riſe,
And, as they are unknown, are ſafe and wiſe.
At whomſoever aim'd, howe'er ſevere
Th'envenom'd ſlander flies, no names appear.
Prudence forbid that ſtep.---Then all might know,
And on more equal terms engage the foe.

But:

But now, what Quixote of the age would care
To wage a war with dirt, and fight with air?
By int'reſt join'd, th'expert confed'rates ſtand,
And play the game into each other's hand.
The vile abuſe, in turn by all deny'd,
Is bandy'd up and down from ſide to ſide:
It flies---hey!---preſto!---like a jugler's ball,
'Till it belongs to nobody at all.

All men and things they know; themſelves unknown,
And publiſh ev'ry name---except their own.
Nor think this ſtrange---ſecure from vulgar eyes
The nameleſs author paſſes in diſguiſe.
But vet'ran critics are not ſo deceiv'd,
If vet'ran critics are to be believ'd.
Once ſeen they know an author evermore,
Nay ſwear to hands they never ſaw before.
Thus in the Rosciad, beyond chance or doubt,
They, by the writing, found the writers out.
"That's Lloyd's---his manner there you plainly trace,
"And all the Actor ſtares you in the face.
"By Colman that was written.---On my life,
"The ſtrongeſt ſymptoms of the Jealous Wife.

"That little ingenuous piece of ſpite,
"CHURCHILL, wretch unknown, perhaps might write."
How doth it make judicious readers ſmile,
When authors are detected by their ſtile:
Tho' ev'ry one who knows this author, knows
He ſhifts his ſtile much oftner than his cloaths?

WHENCE could ariſe this mighty critic ſpleen,
The Muſe a trifler, and her theme ſo mean?
What had I done, that angry HEAVEN ſhould ſend
The bitt'reſt Foe, where moſt I wiſh a Friend?
Oft hath my tongue been wanton at thy name,
And hail'd the honours of thy matchleſs fame.
For me let hoary FIELDING bite the ground
So nobler PICKLE ſtand ſuperbly bound.
From LIVY's temples tear th'hiſtoric crown
Which, with more juſtice blooms upon thine own.
Compar'd with thee, be all life-writers dumb,
But he who wrote the life of TOMMY THUMB.
Who ever read the REGICIDE but ſwore
The author wrote as man ne'er wrote before;
Others for plots and under-plots may call,
Here's the right method---have no plot at all.

Who can ſo often in his cauſe engage,
The tiny Pathos of the Grecian ſtage,
Whilſt horrors riſe, and tears ſpontaneous flow
At tragic Ha! and no leſs tragic Oh!
His NERVOUS WEAKNESS all to praiſe agree;
And then, for ſweetneſs, who ſo ſweet as he?
Too big for utterance when ſorrows ſwell
The two big ſorrows flowing tears muſt tell:
But when thoſe flowing tears ſhall ceaſe to flow,
Why,---then the voice muſt ſpeak again you know.

RUDE and unſkilful in the Poet's trade,
I kept no Naiads by me ready made;
Ne'er did I colours high in air advance,
Torn from the bleeding fopperies of France:
No flimſey linſey-woolſey ſcenes I wrote
With patches here and there like Joſeph's coat.
Me humbler themes befit: Secure, for me,
Let Playwrights ſmuggle nonſenſe duty free:
Secure, for me, ye lambs, ye lambkins bound,
And friſk and frolic o'er the fairy ground:
Secure, for me, thou pretty little fawn
Lick SYLVIA's hand; and crop the flow'ry lawn:

Uncenſur'd let the gentle breezes rove,
Thro' the green umbrage of th'enchanted grove:
Secure, for me, let foppiſh Nature ſmile,
And play the coxcomb in the DESART ISLE.

THE Stage I choſe---a ſubject fair and free---
'Tis yours---'tis mine---'tis Public Property.
All common exhibitions open lye
For Praiſe or Cenſure to the Common Eye.
Hence are a thouſand Hackney-writers fed;
Hence Monthly Critics earn their Daily Bread.
This is a gen'ral tax which all muſt pay,
From thoſe who ſcribble, down to thoſe who play.
Actors, a venal crew, receive ſupport
From public bounty, for the public ſport.
To clap or hiſs, all have an equal claim,
The cobblers's and his lordſhip's right the ſame.
All join for their ſubſiſtence; all expect
Free leave to praiſe their worth, their faults correct.
When active PICKLE Smithfield ſtage aſcends,
The three days wonder of his laughing friends;
Each, or as judgment, or as fancy guides,
The lively witling praiſes or derides.

And where's the mighty diff'rence, tell me where,
Betwixt a Merry Andrew and a Play'r?

The ſtrolling tribe, a deſpicable race,
Like wand'ring Arabs, ſhift from place to place.
Vagrants by law, to juſtice open laid,
They tremble, of the Beadle's laſh afraid,
And fawning cringe, for wretched means of life,
To Madam May'reſs or his Worſhip's Wife.

The mighty monarch, in theatric ſack,
Carries his whole regalia at his back;
His royal conſort heads the female band,
And leads the heir-apparent in her hand;
The pannier'd aſs creeps on with conſcious pride,
Bearing a future prince on either ſide.
No choice muſicians in this troop are found
To varniſh nonſenſe with the charms of ſound;
No ſwords, no daggers, not one poiſon'd bowl;
No lightning flaſhes here, no thunders roll;
No guards to ſwell the monarch's train are ſhewn;
The monarch here muſt be an hoſt ALONE.
No ſolemn pomp, no ſlow proceſſions here;
No Ammon's entry, and no Juliet's bier.

By need compell'd to proſtitute his art,
The varied actor flies from part to part;
And, ſtrange diſgrace to all theatric pride,
His character is ſhifted with his ſide.
Queſtion and Anſwer he by turns muſt be,
Like that ſmall wit in MODERN TRAGEDY;
Who, to ſupport his fame.---or fill his purſe,---
Still pilfers wretched plans, and makes them worſe;
Like gypſies, leaſt the ſtolen brat be known,
Defacing firſt, then claiming for his own.
In ſhabby ſtate they ſtrut, and tatter'd robe;
The ſcene a blanket, and a barn the globe.
No high conceits their moderate wiſhes raiſe,
Content with humble profit, humble praiſe.
Let dowdies ſimper and let bumpkins ſtare,
The ſtrolling pageant heroe treads in air:
Pleas'd for his hour he to mankind gives law,
And ſnores the next out on a truſs of ſtraw.

BUT if kind Fortune, who we ſometimes know
Can take a heroe from a puppet-ſhew,
In mood propitious ſhould her fav'rite call,
On royal ſtage in royal pomp to bawl,

For-

Forgetful of himſelf he rears the head,
And ſcorns the dunghill where he firſt was bred:
Converſing now with well-dreſs'd kings and queens,
With gods and goddeſſes behind the ſcenes,
He ſweats beneath the terror-nodding plume,
Taught by Mock Honours Real Pride t' aſſume.
On this great ſtage the World, no monarch e'er
Was half ſo haughty as a Monarch-Player.

DOTH it more move our anger or our mirth
To ſee theſe THINGS, the loweſt ſons of earth,
Preſume, with ſelf-ſufficient knowledge grac'd,
To rule in Letters and preſide in Taſte.
The TOWN's deciſions they no more admit,
Themſelves alone the ARBITERS of Wit;
And ſcorn the juriſdiction of that COURT
To which they owe their being and ſupport.
Actors, like monks of old, now ſacred grown,
Muſt be attack'd by no fools but their own.

LET the vain Tyrant ſit amidſt his guards,
His puny GREEN-ROOM Wits and Venal Bards,
Who meanly tremble at the Puppet's frown,
And, for a Playhouſe Freedom loſe their own;

In ſpite of new-made Laws, and new-made Kings,
The free-born Muſe with lib'ral ſcorn ſings:
Bow down, ye Slaves; before theſe Idols fall;
Let Genius ſtoop to them who've none at all:
Ne'er will I flatter, cringe, or bend the knee
To thoſe who, Slaves to ALL, are Slaves to ME.

ACTORS, as Actors, are a lawful game;
The poet's right; and Who ſhall bar his claim?
And, if o'er-weening of their little ſkill,
When they have left the Stage they're Actors ſtill;
If to the ſubject world they ſtill give laws,
With paper crowns, and ſceptres made of ſtraws;
If they in cellar or in garret roar,
And Kings one night, are Kings for evermore;
Shall not bold Truth, e'en there, purſue her theme,
And wake the Coxcomb from his golden dream?
Or if, well worthy of a better fate,
They riſe ſuperior to their preſent ſtate;
If, with each ſocial virtue grac'd they blend
The gay companion and the faithful friend;
If they, like PRITCHARD, join in private life
The tender parent and the virtuous wife;

Shall

Shall not our Verſe their praiſe with pleaſure ſpeak,
Though Mimics bark and Envy ſplit her cheek?
No honeſt worth's beneath the Muſe's praiſe;
No greatneſs can above her cenſure raiſe:
Station and wealth, to Her, are trifling things;
She ſtoops to Actors, and ſhe ſoars to Kings.

Is there a man, in vice and folly bred,
To ſenſe of honour as to virtue dead;
Whom ties nor human, nor divine, can bind;
Alien to God, and foe to all mankind;
Who ſpares no character; whoſe ev'ry word,
Bitter as gall, and ſharper than the ſword,
Cuts to the quick; whoſe thoughts with rancour ſwell!
Whoſe tongue, on earth, performs the work of Hell?
If there be ſuch a monſter, the Reviews
Shall find him holding forth againſt Abuſe.
" Attack Profeſſion!---'tis a deadly breach!---
" The Chriſtian laws another leſſon teach:---
" Unto the end ſhould charity endure,
" And Candour hide thoſe faults it cannot cure."
Thus Candour's maxims flow from Rancour's throat,
As devils, to ſerve their purpoſe, Scripture quote.

The Muſe's office was by Heav'n deſign'd,
To pleaſe, improve, inſtruct, reform mankind;
To make dejected Virtue nobly riſe
Above the tow'ring pitch of ſplendid Vice;
To make pale Vice, abaſh'd, her head hang down,
And trembling crouch at Virtue's awful frown.
Now arm'd with wrath, ſhe bids eternal ſhame;
With ſtricteſt juſtice brands the villain's name:
Now in the milder garb of Ridicule
She ſports, and pleaſes while ſhe wounds the Fool.
Her ſhape is often varied; but her aim,
To prop the cauſe of Virtue, ſtill the ſame.
In praiſe of Mercy let the guilty bawl,
When Vice and Folly for Correction call;
Silence the mark of weakneſs juſtly bears,
And is partaker of the crimes it ſpares.

But if the Muſe, too cruel in her mirth,
With harſh reflexions wound the man of worth;
If wantonly ſhe deviate from her plan,
And quits the Actor to expoſe the Man;
Aſham'd, ſhe marks that paſſage with a blot,
And hates the line where Candour was forgot.

But what is Candour, what is Humour's vein,
Tho' Judgment join to conſecrate the ſtrain,
If curious numbers will not aid afford,
Nor choiceſt muſic play in ev'ry word?
Verſes muſt run, to charm a modern ear,
From all harſh, rugged interruptions clear:
Soft let them breathe, as Zephyr's balmy breeze;
Smooth let their current flow as ſummer ſeas;
Perfect then only deem'd when they diſpenſe
A happy tuneful vacancy of ſenſe.
Italian fathers thus, with barb'rous rage,
Fit helpleſs infants for the ſqueaking ſtage:
Deaf to the calls of pity, Nature wound,
And mangle vigour for the ſake of ſound.
Henceforth farewell then, fev'riſh thirſt of fame;
Farewell the longings for a Poet's name;
Periſh my Muſe;---a wiſh 'bove all ſevere
To him who ever held the Muſes dear,
If e'er her labours weaken to refine
Th' gen'rous roughneſs of a nervous line.

Others affect the ſtiff and ſwelling phraſe;
Their Muſe muſt walk in ſtilts and ſtrut in ſtays

The ſenſe they murder, and the words tranſpoſe,
Leſt Poetry approach too near to Proſe.
See, tortur'd Reaſon how they pare and trim,
And, like Procruſtes, ſtretch or lop the limb.

Waller, whoſe praiſe ſucceeding bards rehearſe,
Parent of harmony in Engliſh verſe,
Whoſe tuneful Muſe in ſweeteſt accent flows,
In couplets firſt taught ſtraggling ſenſe to cloſe.

In poliſh'd numbers, and majeſtic ſound,
Where ſhall thy rival, Pope, be ever found?
But whilſt each line with equal beauty flows,
E'en excellence, unvary'd, tedious grows.
Nature, thro' all her works, in great degree,
Borrows a bleſſing from Variety.
Muſic itſelf her needful aid requires
To rouze the ſoul, and wake our dying fires.
Still in one key, the Nightingale would teize:
Still in one key, not Brent would always pleaſe.

Here let me bend, great Dryden, at thy ſhrine,
Thou deareſt name to all the tuneful nine.

What if ſome dull lines in cold order creep,
And with his theme the poet ſeems to ſleep?
Still when his ſubject riſes proud to view,
With equal ſtrength the poet riſes too.
With ſtrong invention, nobleſt vigour fraught,
Thought ſtill ſprings up and riſes out of thought.
Numbers, ennobling numbers in their courſe,
In varied ſweetneſs flow, in varied force.
The pow'rs of Genius and of Judgment join,
And the Whole Art of Poetry is Thine.

But what are Numbers, what are Bards to me,
Forbid to tread the paths of Poeſy?
" A ſacred muſe ſhould conſecrate her Pen;
" Prieſts muſt not hear nor ſee like other Men;
" Far higher themes ſhould her ambition claim;
" Behold where Sternhold points the way to Fame.

Whilst, with miſtaken zeal, dull bigots burn,
Let Reason for a moment take her turn.
When Coffee-ſages hold diſcourſe with kings,
And blindly walk in Paper Leading-ſtrings,
What if a man delight to paſs his time
In ſpinning Reaſon into lengthen'd Rhime?